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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER  
OF THE OREGON  
CITIZENS' UTILITY BOARD

# THE BEAR FACTS

SPRING 2026

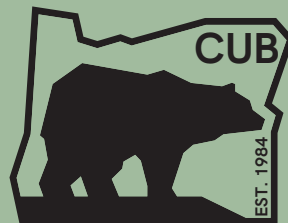
## SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER

### BIG WIN FROM CUB THIS SPRING NEW ENERGY UTILITY CONSUMER PROTECTIONS

In 2024, Oregon's for-profit utilities disconnected a record number of customers, nearly 70,000 households, because of past-due energy bills. Throughout last year, CUB and energy advocates pushed regulators to support these struggling families. Now, Oregonians have stronger disconnection protections for gas and electric utilities.

**Stronger consumer protections  
keep Oregonians connected to power**

Oregon's for-profit utilities now have stricter limits on when they can charge a reconnection fee and how much upfront costs a customer pays to be reconnected, lowering the barrier for getting utilities turned back on. The new protections also keep Oregon households safely connected to power during extreme heat, extreme cold, and very poor air quality. These protections ensure more families stay safe year-round.



THE BEAR  
FACTS

SPRING 2026

## DEAR CUB MEMBERS

As the flowers begin to bloom in my garden, I'm struck by gratitude for the CUB team and our members. CUB always stands up for the little guy, and you stand with us. I'm grateful for members like you who generously support us with your time and resources.

This year, our team hit the ground running by advocating for new customer protections. We pushed regulators to finalize permanent, year-round disconnection protections to help struggling Oregon households with past-due bills. These expanded consumer protections will help keep you and your neighbors connected to power.

CUB is also going toe-to-toe with two of Oregon's major gas utilities. We're pushing back against NW Natural and Cascade Gas's attempts to raise your bills and make risky investments with customers' money. We'll keep fighting to ensure customers aren't left footing the bill for gas utilities' attempts to expand their systems.

We're also making progress on implementing the legislative victories we secured last year. Our staff is following through with our commitment to fairly implement the new laws we passed. We'll keep pushing for customer affordability and transparency throughout this process.

None of this work can be done without members like you. I'm grateful for your support in making energy more affordable now and for future generations.



*Bob Jenks*

Bob Jenks  
Executive Director, Oregon CUB

## ORGANIZE WITH CUB'S COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

Have you wondered how to take action for affordable energy?

Oregonians are feeling the pinch from rising costs, and energy is becoming unaffordable for many households. In response, David, CUB's Community Organizer, is hosting a **monthly community call** to channel frustration into action.

The virtual training will prepare community members for advocating at the Public Utility Commission and the state legislature. Decision-makers need to hear how energy issues impact your community and household.

Join David's community call and join the fight for our energy affordability! Email [outreach@oregoncub.org](mailto:outreach@oregoncub.org) or scan the QR code to RSVP today!

**RSVP Today!**





**MAKING UTILITIES AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, RELIABLE, & CLEAN FOR THE PEOPLE IN OREGON**

THE BEAR FACTS  
SPRING 2026

2026 RATE INCREASES  
GAS UTILITIES

**NW NATURAL: SMALL INCREASE, BIG RISKS (1.4%)**

NW Natural is asking regulators to approve a 1.4% increase for household gas customers starting October 31. This would add about \$1.40 per month for an average residential customer, with more in winter months when gas usage is higher. Overall, the gas utility is requesting to add \$15.5 million per year to customer bills. **Between 2021 and 2025, NW Natural raised rates by nearly 50% for household customers.**



**Why NW Natural Wants to Raise Rates**

- **Infrastructure Projects:** replacing pipes and other equipment, building a new resource center
- **Updating IT:** investing in new technology
- **Risky Investments:** acquiring and fixing the Coos County pipeline

**CUB is Pushing Back on Charging You for Risky Investments**

We are deeply concerned by NW Natural’s proposal to purchase a risky and expensive pipeline in Coos County. After nearly 20 years of issues, the pipeline needs extensive repairs that are racking up a major bill. CUB is asking that regulators **reject NW Natural’s proposal to stick the cost of these risky investments primarily on household customers** whose bills have already dramatically increased.

**CASCADE: FIRST BIG INCREASE SINCE 2020 (17.4%)**

Cascade Natural Gas is asking regulators to approve a 17.4% increase for household gas customers starting October 31. Customers could see **average home gas bills rise to \$75 per month**, a \$11 per month increase. Overall, the gas utility is requesting to add \$10.3 million per year to residential customers. This amount could grow as the utility assesses fuel costs.



**Why Cascade Gas Wants to Raise Rates**

- **Higher Profits:** increasing how much shareholders earn
- **Infrastructure Projects:** upgrading pipes and other equipment
- **Risky Investments:** renewable natural gas projects and purchases

**CUB’s Concerns**

CUB is pushing back on this request to ensure customers pay only for the lowest-cost, most reasonable investments in our utility systems. Cascade wants customers to keep subsidizing new gas hookups, despite being the last remaining Oregon gas utility that charges customers to grow their business. Combined with expensive investments in renewable natural gas plants and increasing profits by 1%, **customers could be on the hook for millions of dollars each year.**

WHAT CUB SUPPORTERS ARE SAYING



“WITH EVERYTHING ON THE RISE ON COST OF LIVING ALREADY OUT OF REACH FOR MANY, PLEASE FOR THE LOVE OF ALL THAT IS GOOD DO NOT LET CASCADE GAS HAVE THAT EXPANSIVE OF AN INCREASE. THE NUMBER ONE THING THEY LIST IT FOR IS FOR PROFITS FOR THEIR SHAREHOLDERS. THIS IS DEEPLY DISCONNECTED FROM THEIR CUSTOMER BASE AND WILL LIKELY CAUSE SHUT OFF IN AND AROUND SEVERAL HOMES.”

- RYANE B.  
CASCADE NATURAL GAS CUSTOMER



**MAKING UTILITIES AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, RELIABLE, & CLEAN FOR THE PEOPLE IN OREGON**

THE BEAR FACTS  
SPRING 2026

ROLLING OUT NEW LAWS IN 2026  
THE FIGHT FOR AFFORDABLE ENERGY



Last year, CUB passed major energy affordability legislation, addressing several of the root causes of Oregon’s energy affordability crisis. Now, our staff is working hard to implement the new laws.

Together, the FAIR Energy Act and the POWER Act will help lower your energy bills by making sure data centers pay their own way and slow the wave of bill increases by limiting when utilities can ask for more.

**Rolling Out the FAIR Energy Act (HB 3179)**

By mid-2027, regulators will implement the FAIR Energy Act by developing rules and processes for when and how utilities can request rate increases. CUB is deeply involved in this process to ensure the new law is rolled out fairly.

HB 3179 requires utilities to spread out big rate increase requests to at least every three years by 2027, with added customer protections now. It stops increases in home energy rates during the winter, when energy usage and bills are highest. And it increases transparency, so you know what you are paying for and what to expect from increases.

**BANNING WINTER BILL INCREASES**  
(MARCH 2026)

**INTERIM RULES FOR BILL INCREASES**  
(APRIL 2026)

**REPORTS ON NEW BILL INCREASES**  
(MARCH 2027)

**SPREAD OUT BIG BILL INCREASES**  
(SUMMER 2027)

Our staff will continue working toward affordability and transparency throughout this process, ensuring the priorities of customers are front and center.

**Enforcing the POWER Act (HB 3546)**

Data centers are driving up energy costs for Oregon households. We passed the POWER Act last year to address this reality. Utilities now must change how they charge these large energy users for energy costs. PGE is the first utility up.

PGE’s initial proposal for reallocating data center costs sparked heavy criticism. More than 1,300 community members submitted public comments, one of the largest volumes in recorded history at the Oregon Public Utility Commission. Thanks to CUB pushback and public pressure, PGE’s new proposal shows significant improvements.



But we don’t think this new proposal goes far enough. Many issues remain in holding data centers fully accountable. CUB will keep pushing for data centers to pay for their own energy, ensuring you won’t be left footing the bill.